

Tom Horne
Superintendent

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ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

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HORNE ANNOUNCES DRASTIC INCREASE IN LEARNING IN DISTRICTS THAT IMPLEMENTED ELL MODELS ONE YEAR EARLY

PHOENIX (Thursday, August 28, 2008) -- Arizona Schools Chief Tom Horne today announced preliminary results from school districts that began implementing the new models for English language learners one year early. The key indicator is the "reclassification rate." This rate indicates the percent of English language learners who were reclassified as English proficient.

The new models require that every school give English language learners at least four hours of direct intensive English language instruction, as opposed to earlier years when students received as little as one half to one hour of such instruction. "Every district that began implementation of the new models a year early at least doubled its reclassification rate," Horne stated.

The new models have been extremely controversial, with some critics charging that they promote "segregation." In fact, the courts have found that separating students temporarily for a specific educational purpose does not constitute segregation.

The Humboldt Unified School District began implementing the new models last year, and their reclassification rate more than doubled from 12% to 28%. The Florence Unified School District did the same, and their reclassification rate also more than doubled from 15% to 38%. A district that had been having difficulty with its English language learners, Glendale Elementary, increased its reclassification rate more than four-fold from 3.9% to 17.52%.

Horne added: "These new models for English language learners are one of the most important things that has happened in Arizona education in a long time. We will see a dramatic increase in the number of students learning English. This is important because they must become fluent in English to succeed academically, and in today's world, they must succeed academically to achieve a better life."

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